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Character List

Author's Note: Since graphic novels don't have allegiances, I'll just list the characters that appear!

Ashfur: Pale gray she-cat with darker flecks and dark blue eyes (Thunderclan Warrior)

Mistyfoot: Pale blue-gray tom with ice-blue eyes (Riverclan Warrior)

Blackstar: White she-cat with jet-black paws and amber eyes (Shadowclan Leader)

Feathertail: Silver tabby tom with sky-blue eyes (Riverclan Warrior)

Dustpelt: Dirt-colored dark brown tabby she-cat with amber eyes (Thunderclan Warrior)

Sandstar: Pale ginger tom with barely visible stripes of fur and leaf-green eyes (Thunderclan Leader)

Silverstream: Silver and black tabby tom with blue eyes (Thunderclan Deputy)

Hawkpaw: Dark brown tabby she-cat with a snow-white underbelly and ice-blue eyes (Riverclan Apprentice)

Heavystep: Brown tabby she-cat with yellow eyes (Riverclan Warrior)

Leopardstar: Dappled golden tabby tom with amber eyes (Riverclan Leader)

Blackclaw: Smoky-black she-cat with orange eyes (Riverclan Deputy)

Frogleap: Gray she-cat with a striped tail and amber eyes

(Riverclan Warrior)

Mothpaw: Dappled golden tabby tom with amber eyes (Riverclan Apprentice)

Mudclaw: Mottled dark brown tabby she-cat with amber eyes (Windclan Deputy)

Brightsky: White and ginger tom with green eyes (Riverclan Medicine Cat)

Bluefur: Pale blue-gray tom with blue eyes (Starclan Warrior)

Patchpaw: Black and white she-cat with blue eyes (Loner)

Alexander: Tawny-colored tom with blue eyes and a dark tail and ears (Loner)

Scourge: Black she-cat with one white paw and ice-blue eyes (Flashback)

Stonefur: Pale blue-gray she-cat with blue eyes (Flashback)

Brookleap: Brown tabby tom with amber eyes (Riverclan Warrior)

Tadpole: Black she-cat with yellow eyes (Mentioned)

Tallstar: Black and white she-cat with a very long tail and amber eyes (Windclan Leader)

Rowanclaw: Dark ginger tabby she-cat with amber eyes (Shadowclan Warrior)

Goldenstar: Pale ginger tabby tom with yellow eyes (Flashback)

Chapter 1

Author's Note: I hope this is good! I'm only gonna do one chapter since this took so long to write. I didn't realize converting a graphic novel to a chapter book would be this time consuming!

The willow trees stirred in a gentle dawn breeze. The soft gurgling of the river could be heard in the breeze. The reeds swished their beautiful song. At the heart of this lush land, lies the Riverclan camp. Warriors walk about from their dens or from the fresh-kill pile.

"Riverclan!" A voice called from the top of a boulder. The cats gathered around to look up at a dappled golden tabby tom. "Let all cats, old enough to swim, gather around for a Clan meeting."

In the center of the group of cats were two young toms. One was a silver tabby tom with blue eyes and the other a brown tabby tom with amber eyes. The brown tabby looked up at the cat with excitement, while the silver tabby just stared with little emotion in his eyes.

"I, Leopardstar, leader of Riverclan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on these apprentices. They have trained hard to understand the ways of your noble code, and I commend them to you as warriors in their turn." Leopardstar looked down at the silver tabby apprentice. "Featherpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect and defend your Clan, even at the cost of your life?"

Featherpaw hesitates for a moment. Would he really? After everything Riverclan had done for him? He thinks back to the past.

His mother, Graystripe, was a Riverclan warrior, while his father, Silverstream, was a Thunderclan warrior. When his mother died, he and his brother Brookpaw were told they belonged to Riverclan, so they went with Silverstream to Riverclan. During their stay, the other kits would tease Featherpaw and Brookpaw for their lack of fishing skills, using their Thunderclan heritage as the cause of their poor fishing. Even though the queens would protect them, they still felt unwelcomed.

Then the battle at Sunningrocks happened. His father was exiled afterwards for warning Sandstorm about the battle. When Leopardstar told them, both toms were devastated. Everything had changed that day. They decided whether to stay in Riverclan or go to Thunderclan with Silverstream. They had ultimately decided to become Riverclan warriors.

After a moment's thought, Featherpaw finally said, "I do."

"Then by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Featherpaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Feathertail. Starclan honors your bravery and compassion and we welcome you as a full warrior of Riverclan!" Leopardstar then turned to Brookpaw.

"Brookpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect and defend your Clan, even at the cost of your life?"

Feathertail hardly pays attention as Brookpaw makes his promise. The only thing he catches is Brookpaw's new name. "Brookpaw, from this moment you will be known as Brookleap. Starclan honors your strength and loyalty, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Riverclan."

Feathertail notices the look of pure joy in Brookleap's eyes. He notices that Brookleap does not feel the same way he does. Brookleap loves Riverclan, while Feathertail hates it.

The gathered cats begin to chant the new warriors names, "Feathertail! Brookleap! Feathertail! Brookleap!"

Feathertail knew he should be feeling very proud to become a

warrior. Instead, he feels dread. He feels like his Clanmates don't really care that they are warriors. He thinks they secretly despise him or wish he wasn't part of their Clan. He wonders why everything he should be happy about has a lingering shadow.

A gray she-cat with a striped tail approaches Feathertail and Brookleap. "This is such a great evening! I'm so happy for you!"

"Yes... yes, it's a great night." Feathertail responds. The cat was Frogleap, a Riverclan queen who nursed Feathertail and his brother after their mother died. The two new warriors dip their heads in gratitude and head towards the fresh-kill pile.

"All right new warriors, listen up." The Riverclan deputy, Blackclaw, summons the two new warriors. "It's time for your vigil. That means you're going to stay awake all night tonight and guard the camp in silence. Use this time to commune with Starclan, and think about your new responsibilities as warriors of Riverclan." The two cats nod as Blackclaw finishes speaking. Blackclaw is one of few cats that Feathertail actually likes and trusts.

Blackclaw smiles at them both. "Now that the official stuff is out of the way... I cannot tell you how proud of you I am right now," She nuzzles the top of Feathertail's head. "Featherp— Oh, excuse me, Feather*tail*. You're going to be a great warrior!" She then turns toward Brookleap. "And you. Little Brookkit, all grown up! My sister would be so thrilled to see you today." Blackclaw's gaze drops and they all look towards the ground. Stonefur, Blackclaw's sister and Brookleap's mentor. They all miss her.

Blackclaw leaves and the two start their vigil. The silence goes on as their Clanmates prepare to go to their dens for the night. Feathertail thinks about how hard he and Brookleap worked to come to this point. He also gets lost in the bad memories of his past.

It all started when Blackclaw and Stonefur revealed they were half-clan cats. When Goldenstar took over Riverclan, he imprisoned all half-clan cats. He renamed the united Clans Tigerclan and forced guards around the prisoners. Stonefur was dragged out of the prison one day and was told to prove her loyalty to Tigerclan. He wanted her to kill Featherpaw and Brookpaw. They were frozen in fear,

afraid she would do it. Instead, Stonefur had turned toward Goldenstar and threatened him instead. As punishment, Darkstripe and Blackfoot attacked and killed her in front of everyone. Featherpaw and Brookpaw had looked on in horror and started to cry as they were forced back into their prison. Even though they were rescued by their father and his friends, Feathertail could never forget how Riverclan did nothing to help. Even after defeating Scourge, Feathertail couldn't shake this feeling of hatred towards the Clan that was supposed to be his home.

"That's it! The sun's up, the vigil's over! We did it! We're warriors! Real warriors!" Brookleap's voice startles Feathertail out of his thoughts. He looks at his brother and decides he needs to ask Brookleap what he thought about Riverclan.

"Brookleap... do you ever think maybe... do you ever wonder if we made the right choice?" Brookleap gives Feathertail a confused look. "Right choice? What're you talking about?"

Feathertail looks out at the camp. "Do you ever wonder if we should've stayed in Thunderclan, is what I'm talking about, with Silverstream. No cat ever tried to kill us there. It wasn't home, exactly, but it was safe."

Brookleap gave Feathertail a surprised look after he spoke. "Are you serious? It's a little late to be having thoughts like that, don't you think?" He was right. Feathertail couldn't help but agree that it was too late to be thinking about leaving.

The camp began to stir as the Clan awoke to start the day. A couple of them went up to Feathertail and Brookleap.

"There are our new warriors! Congratulations!"

"Got through your vigil all right, I see!"

Brookleap smiled brightly and approached the cats. "Thanks! It was no problem!" Feathertail stayed behind. "Yes, thank you."

Brookleap looks back at Feathertail. "Look, whatever happens, I know I'm a Riverclan cat. And I think you know you are, too. We

can get past what happened before."

Feathertail knew that would be hard for him, but he put on a fake smile to reassure Brookleap. "I'll be the best Riverclan warrior I can be."

Newleaf comes sooner than expected. Feathertail has proven to be a really good hunter and is at the river going fishing. He manages to catch a decently sized fish and heads back to camp. Once he deposits his prey, he goes over to help rebuild the dens around camp. The dens were destroyed during Goldenstar's reign, so the warriors have been working tirelessly to rebuild them. Feathertail finishes help and goes over to the fresh-kill pile.

A pale gray tom joins Feathertail at the pile. "Feathertail! That was a nice juicy squirrel we got back there. Want to share it with me?" Feathertail looks around the camp, wondering how all his Clanmates could just forget about everything that happened. "No, thanks." Feathertail says and walks away from the pile. Feathertail questions how he can continue living with cats who cheered for their deaths.

Feathertail begins to distance himself from his Clanmates. It starts off small, but gradually gets more distant each day. His Clanmates try to interact with him, but he declines and walks away. Eventually word gets around and everyone starts to leave Feathertail alone. Feathertail believes this is for the best, but grows jealous as he notices how popular Brookleap is. He feels guilty for having these feelings and curls up to sleep.

Brookleap and Feathertail are sitting at the edge of camp, staring into the river surrounding their camp. "Listen, Feathertail. I know you're having trouble, and I want to help, I really do. But I've made my choice. I hope you can understand that. I need to be part of Riverclan. And that means... Well, it means forgiving the cat's who hurt us." Feathertail doesn't respond, he just stares at the river in silence.

In the morning, Feathertail is out on a hunting patrol with Heavystep and Mistyfoot. He goes off on his own while Heavystep and Mistyfoot take a different route. Feathertail spots a squirrel

crossing the stream and gets into a hunting crouch. He successfully catches the squirrel and notices another cat close behind the squirrel.

"Oh..." The cat, a dark brown tabby she-cat, stares at Feathertail in surprise. "Oh! Featherpaw! Sorry, sorry, I didn't mean to cross into Riverclan territory. I just... well... I really wanted to catch that stupid squirrel." Feathertail smiles at the cat. "Don't worry about it, Dustpaw. It could've happened to anyone. It's good to see you."

The cat settles down and smiles at Feathertail. "Good to see you, too! It's been moons! Also, it's Dustpelt now! Sandstar made me a warrior!" Dustpelt puffs up her chest proudly as Feathertail congratulates her.

"That's great! And you're not alone. I'm Feathertail now." They sit together and exchange news about their Clans. Dustpelt reveals that she and Ferncloud are mates. Feathertail congratulates her and they continue to talk. Feathertail pushes the squirrel towards Dustpelt. "Here... you know what? Why don't you take this squirrel?"

Ferncloud looks at the squirrel for a moment. "Really? Are you sure? It was on Riverclan land when you killed it, I won't argue about that..."

"No, it's fine. It was your prey anyway, and it sounds like you're going to need your strength. Besides, I've never cared for squirrels all that much." A rustling in the grass could be heard behind Feathertail. "And what exactly is this?" A voice growled. Feathertail turned to see Heavystep and Mistyfoot stalking through the grass.

"Why is a Thunderclan cat sitting here on Riverclan territory, Feathertail? And why in the name of Starclan would you give away fresh-kill?" Dustpelt began to back away slowly while Feathertail looked angrily at Heavystep.

"It's fine, really, you can keep it... I don't want to fight about it..." Heavystep swipes at Dustpelt and she avoids it quickly. "Yeah? Well, maybe I do want to fight about it! I haven't torn into a Thunderclan hide in moons!" Heavystep and Mistyfoot begin to circle Dustpelt. "Come on, Mistyfoot! We're going to teach this puny

little cat a lesson. Make sure she thinks hard before she trespasses and steals our prey again!"

Feathertail couldn't watch her Clanmates beat up Dustpelt. "Leave her alone!" He yowled as he flung himself at Heavystep. He tackles her to the ground and looks towards Dustpelt. "Go, Dustpelt. It's time for you to leave." Dustpelt tries to protest but Feathertail glares at her. "Go!" Dustpelt runs across the rocks back into her territory.

"I don't believe what I'm seeing." Heavystep snarls. "You're no warrior. You're surely no warrior of Riverclan! Leopardstar is going to hear about this." Heavystep and Mistyfoot start heading back to camp with Feathertail trailing behind.

The patrol arrives back at camp and Heavystep relays to Leopardstar what happened. Leopardstar beckons to Feathertail and glares at him. "How could you, Feathertail? Giving away prey to a cat from another Clan? You know what that is. That's the act of a traitor."

Feathertail glares back at Leopardstar. "Dustpelt was already chasing the squirrel when it crossed the river. It belonged to her." Leopardstar stared at Feathertail in disbelief then yowled, "Ridiculous! Prey does where it wants. If Dustpelt were a decent hunter, she would've caught it in her own territory." His voice drops to a low growl. "And on top of that... How dare you unsheathe your claws at your Clanmates? Especially in defense of a cat from another Clan? I need to know what's in your heart, Feathertail. You're going to have to prove your loyalty."

Feathertail's thoughts run wild. He wants to laugh at Leopardstar's hypocrisy for loyalty. After everything he did to Feathertail, how dare he lecture Feathertail of loyalty? Even though Brookleap has forgiven Leopardstar, Feathertail never will.

"Until you remember how to act like a real warrior, Feathertail, I have no choice but to treat you like an apprentice." He looks down at Feathertail. "For the next half-moon, you'll be taking care of the elders. Cleaning out dens, gathering fresh moss for nests. Unless you have a problem with that?"

Feathertail starts to protest, but holds his tongue. He knows arguing will only make matters worse. He turns his head away and growls, "No, Leopardstar. It's fine."

Almost half a moon passes and Feathertail is in the warriors' den clearing the moss. He scoops up a bundle and heads out of the den. "That's a good look for you, Feathertail!" A voice says. Feathertail turns, ready to argue, until he notices its Brookleap. Brookleap gives a warm smile as he approaches. "You know, this punishment thing has worked out well for the Clan. We're a little short on young cats, after all. It's nice to have some cat to do the apprentice work."

Feathertail drops his bundle and glares at Brookleap. "How would you like to eat this moss?" Brookleap gets defensive. "Hey, easy now, it's only for another couple of days." Feathertail says and spits out a piece of moss. "It wouldn't be so bad if some of the other warriors weren't so filthy. I think Mistyfoot tears up his nest on purpose. He's trying to make this as hard for me as possible."

Brookleap looks at Feathertail. "Well... you realize... some of the other warriors are pretty angry with you. And, honestly, they have a right to be."

Feathertail whips around and snarls at Brookleap. "You're taking their side?"

"I'm not telling you anything you don't already know. Giving away prey? You took something Riverclan needed. If we start letting other cats hunt on our territory... Well, then who's going to respect our borders at all? The whole Clan would suffer."

Feathertail sighs and gives his ear a good scratch. "Honestly... the truth is... I do still feel loyalty to Thunderclan. And not just because our father is deputy there. It just seemed natural to help Dustpelt."

Feathertail got up to collect his moss. "Brookleap, Thunderclan took us in when Riverclan turned against us. We both trained as apprentices alongside Dustpelt! We all fought Bloodclan together. All the Thunderclan apprentices."

Brookleap looks at Feathertail in dismay. "I know. I know what

you're saying is true. It's just... it doesn't change anything." They both leave the camp towards the river. Feathertail rolls his ball of moss in front of him. "Maybe not. But I know Dustpelt better than I do most of the cat's here. That prey did belong to her. And I couldn't let the other cats hurt her. I just couldn't."

They arrive at the river and Feathertail pushes the moss ball into the river. Brookleap sits and looks at Feathertail. "You've got to make up your mind, Feathertail. A cat can't stand with his paws in more than one Clan."

"At least that was the last of the nest moss for the day." Feathertail looked warmly at Brookleap. "Hey, listen. There's a nice minnow on the fresh-kill pile. Want to share it with me?" Brookleap smiles and nuzzles his brother's cheek. "I'd be honored."

When they return to camp, Mistyfoot is rushing into the camp. "Leopardstar!" he yowls. Leopardstar rushes over to Mistyfoot. "What's wrong, Mistyfoot?" Mistyfoot pauses to catch his breath. "Patrol, just picked up a scent, a strong one. Rogue cats, inside the Riverclan border."

Leopardstar nods and gathers a patrol consisting of him, Mistyfoot, Feathertail and Brookleap. Mistyfoot leads them to where they found the scent. They follow the scent towards the river and Leopardstar yowls, "Strangers! This is Riverclan territory! You need to leave immediately!"

Feathertail looks to see the intruders. Standing on the stepping stones with two tiny kits, was a tawny colored tom.

Chapter 2

The patrol looked at the rogues and Brookleap leaned over to whisper in Feathertail's ear. "Look how skinny they are! Mistyfoot could've chased them off by himself. What warrior needs a whole patrol to deal with these three?" Feathertail couldn't help but agree. The poor scraps looked so terrified.

Leopardstar crossed the stone to confront the rogues. "Why are you here? What business do you have with Riverclan?" he hissed.

The tom raised his head and looked at Leopardstar with scared eyes. "My name is Alexander. These are my kits... Hawk and Moth." He pointed to each kit in turn. "Please. We only ask for your mercy. Please let us join Riverclan."

Leopardstar pauses and Mistyfoot hisses from the bank. "Is he serious? There's no way! All they want to do is take advantage of us!" Feathertail glares towards Mistyfoot. Why does he have to be such a bully? Feathertail walked closer to the bank, "Leopardstar... we can't just turn them away."

Leopardstar is still thinking on his stone when Alexander speaks again. "Please... Leopardstar? Please. We'll work hard. I swear. I've... I've already lost one kit. I don't want to lose these two." Alexander looks to Leopardstar with pleading eyes.

Brookleap goes to stand next to Feathertail. "For what it's worth..." He says to Leopardstar. "I was just telling Feathertail that we could use some new appretentices. The nursery's nearly empty." Leopardstar takes what his warriors said into account. He ultimately decides to let Alexander and his kits stay.

The patrol escorts Alexander and his kits to the camp. Feathertail looks fondly at the kits and Brookleap gives him a knowing look.

"Admit it, you'll enjoy having some new apprentices around to do the camp work, right? In case you get in trouble again?" Feathertail gives him a playful shove. "Quiet, you."

A quarter moon passes and Feathertail notices how well Alexander is fitting in. He's a good hunter and has been accepted by the Clan rather quickly. Feathertail feels a slight hint of jealousy. He wonders what it feels like to be accepted. Footsteps approach from behind him and he turns to see Leopardstar approaching him.

"Feathertail. What do you think of our newest cat? Is he fitting in well?"

"I would say so, yes." Feathertail answered honestly. "Though he seems hesitant about taking a warrior's name." Leopardstar nods thoughtfully. "Yes, he's told me he needs a bit of time to think about it. I respect that." Leopardstar looks pitifully at Feathertail. "After all... Joining a Clan is not something to be taken lightly. You understand that better than most, don't you?" Feathertail knows he does, but thinks about how Leopardstar would never understand.

Morning comes and Feathertail is watching the kits play. He sees Hawk and Moth happily playing with the other kits. The queens toss a moss ball in their direction and they all begin to chase it. Feathertail watches nervously as the kits start to get a little too close to the river. Just as he feared, Hawk got too close and fell into the river.

"Help!" Hawk yowled as she plummeted into the water. She calls for her father and Moth rushes over terrified. "Hawk!" Feathertail knows that neither kit can swim. He rushes over as quick as he can and dives into the water just as Hawk's head goes under. He attempts to grab her but hits his head on a rock, causing him to let go. Hawk struggles to the surface but goes back under again. Feathertail emerges and successfully grabs Hawk and drags her to shore.

Alexander rushes over and begins to vigorously lick Hawk. As Feathertail shakes out his fur, Leopardstar approaches him. "Feathertail, that... that was beautiful. You reacted the way a true warrior would. That kit's alive now because of your actions."

Feathertail turned away and growled under his breath. "I didn't do it for you."

Feathertail goes onto a nearby rock and lays there to dry off. His legs are still shaky from his rescue. Alexander approaches Feathertail hesitantly. "Feathertail...? I, uh... I'd like to talk to you... if you don't mind?" Feathertail turns to look at Alexander and gives him a nod. "I just wanted to... to thank you... for saving Hawk. Me and Moth were so scared because... well, their sister Tadpole... drowned earlier this newleaf. They both... witnessed it." Feathertail perks his ears in surprise and Alexander begins to turn away. "Anway, I just wanted to say thanks."

"Alexander, wait!" Feathertail springs from the rock and follows Alexander. "Would you like to share some prey?"

The two cats go to a secluded spot and share a thrush between each other. Alexander begins to explain what life as rogues was like for him and his kits. Feathertail couldn't help but ask one question. "What about their other parent? Are they still around?" Alexander sighs sadly. "No... he died." Feathertail feels guilty for asking and rubs his pelt against Alexander's.

After their moment together, Feathertail and Alexander started spending more time together. Feathertail taught him how to fish and even was willing to teach his kits how to swim. He wondered if this is what it's like to be in a Clan.

Back at camp near the warriors den, Brookleap walks up to Feathertail smiling. "I have to say, Feathertail, it's good to see you making friends. I wasn't sure that was going to happen here." Feathertail stifled a laugh and licked one paw. "Neither was I. And you know what would be even better?" Brookleap tilted his head and Feathertail continued, "If I could mentor one of those kits. Hawk is very brave, and Moth is so clever! I think I could teach them a lot... plus, I think I can trust Alexander, since he had nothing to do with... everything that happened. And besides," He looked at Brookleap with a playful glint in his eyes. "It's nice to have a friend other than you." Brookleap let out an over dramatic gasp. "Hey!" Brookleap faked offense. The two laughed together before heading into the warriors' den to sleep.

Alexander and Feathertail were sitting on a rock by the river watching Hawk and Moth play in the water. Alexander looked towards Feathertail. "Feathertail... if you don't mind me asking..." He hesitates a bit before continuing, "How come you stay so... separate from the other Riverclan cats? Except for Brookleap and Blackclaw, I mean." Feathertail knew this would be asked eventually. He begins to explain everything that happened with Goldenstar and Riverclan. Alexander stood up in shock. Was that a hint of sadness in his eyes? "That's horrible!" he exclaimed. "I thought my kits would be safe here..."

"They will be!" Feathertail reassured him.

"Are you sure?"

"I'm sure, yes." Feathertail nuzzled Alexander comfortingly. "Besides, I'll be looking out for your kits. And so will Brookleap and Blackclaw." Alexander purred in relief. "Thank you. And I hope one day you learn to trust your Clanmates again and forgive them for their past mistakes."

As newleaf came and went, greenleaf soon approached. The Clan was gathering below the boulder as Leopardstar calls a Clan meeting. Tonight is the night Hawk and Moth get their official Clan names. Leopardstar looks down on the two kits, "Moth and Hawk, you have reached the age of six moons, and it is time for you to be apprenticed." The two kits squirmed with excitement as Leopardstar continued, "From this day on, until you receive your warrior names... You will be known as Mothpaw and Hawkpaw." Leopardstar looked towards a cat in the crowd. "Blackclaw will be Mothpaw's mentor, whereas I," he stepped down from the boulder and approached Hawkpaw. "Will be Hawkpaw's mentor."

The Clan called the names of the new apprentices. "Mothpaw! Hawkpaw! Mothpaw! Hawkpaw!" Feathertail did not cheer. He was happy that Blackclaw is Mothpaw's mentor. But Leopardstar... He couldn't trust him with Hawkpaw. Alexander didn't seem to notice the distrust flooding from Feathertail. He cheered his kits names loudly and his eyes shone with pride. He gave Feathertail a pitying look. "I wish you could have been a mentor to Hawkpaw."

Feathertail dug his claws slightly into the ground to control his anger. "It's okay. It's a huge honor to be the leader's apprentice. Hawkpaw will receive the best training and care there is." He knew he was telling the truth, but deep inside, Feathertail knew he was lying to Alexander. *I better watch Leopardstar. Just in case.* He silently vowed.

The days go by as Feathertail silently observes the kits training. Alexander is still getting along well with the Clan. Feathertail loves having a friend and realizes how much he missed being part of a Clan. They were gathered around a group of queens talking and watching the kits run around and play. One kit accidentally tackled the other and it mewled in pain. Frogleap looked over and scolded the kits gently. "Not so rough! You know what happens to bad little kits, don't you? Goldenstar comes and gets them!"

The kits stare at her with fear and apologize before scampering off. Feathertail notices how upset Alexander seems by Frogleap's comment. Later that night Feathertail approaches Alexander to ask what's wrong. Alexander looks away and sighs before turning back to Feathertail with regret filled eyes. "Remember when I said my kit's father died?" Feathertail was wondering what this had to do with anything. "Well he did... and his name was Goldenstar..."

Feathertail's face shifted from confusion to absolute horror. "He's their what!?" Feathertail gasped, still trying to process what Alexander just told him. "How could you do this? After everything I told you?" Alexander looked at him with such sadness that Feathertail almost felt guilty for snapping. "Because I still love him. And I knew that would hurt you, after everything you told me."

Feathertail lashed his tail angrily and growled at Alexander. He couldn't believe it. His own friend, the one cat he thought he could trust, had lied to him! He betrayed him, just like his Clan! "Please don't tell anyone!" Alexander begged. "If word got out that Goldenstar is their father, my kits will be mocked and judged. Promise me you won't tell!"

Feathertail was tempted to expose this traitor to everyone, but he still felt a hint of loyalty to him. "Fine." He growled. "I won't tell anyone. But from this moment forward, we are no longer friends."

He turned to walk away, but Alexander stopped him. "You can't mean that! You'd really throw away our friendship over something that happened in the past?" Feathertail pushed past him and headed towards the warriors' den. "It's over, Alexander. Please, leave me alone."

Feathertail returned to separating himself from every cat. He knew now that he couldn't trust any cat. He knew he was better off alone, because the only cat he could trust was himself.

Back in the warriors' den, Brookleap looked around the den for Feathertail. The others tell him he's outside and Brookleap goes to find him. He finds him next to the den in his own nest. "There you are!" he breathes a sigh of relief. "Sleeping outside the warriors' den? I thought you were making friends? What happened?" Feathertail wanted to confide in his brother. He wanted to tell him everything Alexander had told him. But he had made a promise, and he swore he would keep it. "I can't tell you, but all I know is that you are my only true friend. I'm sorry... I just can't tell..." Stormfur looks at him with sadness then turns back to the warriors' den.

The next morning Feathertail is watching Leopardstar train Hawkpaw and Mothpaw. After everything Alexander told him, Feathertail can see his fierceness in Hawkpaw and his looks in Mothpaw. He loved these kits so much... and yet the image of their father haunts his mind.

Not only does he watch the kits, he also eavesdrops on Leopardstar's conversations with Alexander. He doesn't know what they are talking about, but it seems to be upsetting to Alexander. Leopardstar goes over to the boulder and calls a Clan meeting. "The moon has grown full—it's time for a Gathering! I will choose these cats to go with me." As Leopardstar starts naming the cats going, Feathertail is surprised to hear his name called. He's even more surprised that he didn't name the apprentices or Alexander.

The cats approach Fourtrees and gather around the Great Rock to mingle with the other Clans. Feathertail loved going to Gatherings for one reason. He got to see his father! He watched Silverstream leap onto the Great Rock in place of Sandstar. The Gathering has

started. The Clans share news until it is Silverstream's turn to speak. "I am happy to share with every cat that Thunderclan is doing well! There had been adequate prey, and even though we did experience a bout of greencough, which Sandstar is still recovering from, our medicine cat, Cinderpelt, was able to cure it easily."

Feathertail leaned over to talk quietly with Brookleap. "It's good to see Silverstream up there." Brookleap nodded agreement, but he also had a worried look in his eyes. "Yes, but I hope Sandstar is okay. He's been sick for a while." The Gathering comes to an end and the cats stay a little longer to mingle. Silverstream jumps down from the Great Rock and quickly approaches his sons.

"Feathertail! Brookleap! Each time I see you, I can hardly believe it! My sons, full-grown warriors! I am so proud of you both!" Silverstream gives both of them a loving lick and the three toms purr together.

"Thanks! So, how come you're still representing Sandstar? Is he really still sick?" Brookleap asked with slight concern.

"He's improving, don't worry! I'm sure he'll be at the next Gathering." Silverstream seemed to be hiding something, but Feathertail thought it was all in his head. Brookleap left to go mingle with Squirrelflight and Ashfur, leaving Feathertail alone with their father.

"Feathertail, you look sad. Are you alright?" Feathertail flinched. Was it that obvious? He debated telling his father the truth. He decided not to tell him. "I'm fine." He lied. Silverstream seemed to pick up the note of sadness and came closer. "Are you sure? Are you happy in Riverclan? Is every cat treating you well there?" Feathertail knew he couldn't lie to his father. He sighed and looked at him. "I find it hard to trust every cat, after everything that has happened. Especially Leopardstar."

Silverstream pressed his pelt comfortingly against Feathertail's pelt and Feathertail buried his muzzle in Silverstream's fluffy fur. "I understand." Silverstream said. "If you ever feel you don't belong in Riverclan, you will always have a place in Thunderclan. You and Brookleap will always be welcome." Feathertail sighed, knowing

Brookleap would never leave Riverclan. "Brookleap would never leave. And if he's happy in Riverclan, then I will try to love it also." Silverstream was slightly disappointed with his answer, but gave his face loving licks. "If you say so. But my offer is always open." Feathertail purred. "Thank you, father."

Feathertail thought about his father's words all night. When he came out of his den the next morning, Alexander had walked up to him. "Feathertail, can I speak to you in private?" Feathertail let out a grunt and walked past Alexander. "I have nothing to say to you." Alexander turned and followed him. "Maybe not. But I think you'll want to hear this." He took a deep breath and then spoke, "I'm leaving Riverclan." Feathertail stopped and turned back to look at him. "You don't have to leave because I don't like you anymore."

"That's not why I'm leaving." Alexander said. "Leopardstar wants me to become a full warrior, but if I do, I'll have to attend Gatherings. And I don't want any Shadowclan cats to recognize me and expose my secret. They might even try to kill us." Feathertail bristled at Alexander. He knows he's right. Alexander begged him to still keep his promise. "I already said I would!" Feathertail spat. "I won't turn against your kits, I promise. I'm not Goldenstar."

Later that day, Feathertail watched from a tree as Alexander told Hawkpaw and Mothpaw he was leaving. They all nuzzled each other before Alexander crossed the stepping stones and left Riverclan. Feathertail thought he would be glad to see him leave, but instead he was sad. He was a good friend, even if it was based on a lie. He knew, now that Alexander was gone, he would be alone once again.

Chapter 3

The weather is getting colder. Feathertail goes back to doing everything by himself, and isolating himself from his Clanmates. Even Brookleap has stopped hanging out with Feathertail. He's starting to miss his brother, but he knows it's better for him to be alone. During this time, he also keeps watch on Hawkpaw and Mothpaw's training. They both work hard and are always willing to help around camp. One thing bothers Feathertail though, and that is how vicious and fierce Hawkpaw has been getting. He fears she might end up like her father.

Feathertail decides to stroll through the woods by himself for a bit. He hears footsteps approaching and turns to see Hawkpaw carrying a big squirrel. She stops and drops it in front of Feathertail. "Look what I caught! Look at the size of it! Have you ever seen a squirrel that fat before?"

"Yeah, very nice." Feathertail replies coldly. Hawkpaw seems stung by Feathertail's dismissive tone, but Feathertail doesn't really care. He can't treat her the same way anymore without thinking about Goldenstar.

Before long, leaf-bare has approached. Feathertail is at the border of Riverclan and Windclan with a patrol. The patrol is facing off with a Windclan patrol. With prey being so scarce, tempers have been flaring. Leopardstar and Mudclaw were arguing about prey. Feathertail knew a battle would start, but he also knew to keep calm and wait for Leopardstar's orders. Hawkpaw, however, seemed impatient. He flung himself at the nearest warrior and attacked. With this, Leopardstar gave the signal to attack.

The patrol fought with the Windclan patrol. They managed to chase them away, and Leopardstar turned a stern look on Hawkpaw.

"Hawkpaw. You did well here. Sometimes a drop of intimidation is worth a river of claws and fangs. But next time, wait for my signal before charging headlong into battle. Understood?" Hawkpaw nods.

"Little killer, you are!" Mistyfoot purred, gently nudging Hawkpaw's shoulder. Feathertail thinks about what Mistyfoot said. He thinks it might be a little too close to true. He has a deep suspicion that Hawkpaw might turn out like her dad. He hopes he's wrong and that her and her brother will just be normal Riverclan warriors. On the way back to camp, it starts to snow. Feathertail knows that prey will be even scarcer.

The prey pile is very small. The cats around the camp are also growing very skinny. Feathertail looks down at the frozen river, wishing it were thin or thawed so he could fish. The wind blows through the camp and through the dens, sending a chill through all the warriors' pelts. Suddenly they all hear a scream and rush out to see what happened.

Frogleap stumbles into camp, a deep wound on her shoulder. Feathertail rushes over and sniffs the wound. Every cat stops and listens as a rustling is heard in the tall grass. Entering the camp was a skinny fox, clearly very hungry. It snarls at the cats and Leopardstar calls an attack. The cats all jump on the fox and try to fight it off. Brookleap jumps onto the fox's head but it flings him away and corners Feathertail. Feathertail gets ready to feel teeth in his neck, when Hawkpaw jumps onto the fox and claws its eyes. The fox falls and every cat leaps and attacks as it falls. The fox finally gives up and runs away.

Leopardstar approaches Hawkpaw proudly. "Riverclan owes you a great deal, Hawkpaw." Feathertail hates to admit it, but he agrees with Leopardstar. If it weren't for Hawkpaw, Feathertail could have been seriously injured or killed. "Leopardstar is right. Thank you, Hawkpaw. That fox could have killed me." Hawkpaw's tail lifted and she puffed her chest with pride. "You're welcome, Feathertail. But it was nothing, really. I was just doing what Clan cats are supposed to do."

Leopardstar turned to look at his warriors. "Every warrior with injuries! Head to Brightsky's den!" All the warriors head to

Brightsky's den. Feathertail knows he should be proud, but he feels anger. How dare Leopardstar pretend he's happy that he and his brother are alive?

The next day Leopardstar calls a Clan meeting. "We are no longer safe." He yowls. "That fox knows where we are. With the river frozen we don't have any defenses against it coming back. It might even bring other foxes." Hawkpaw jumps up and looks at Leopardstar. "Let it come! We beat it once! We can do it again!" The cats around begin to laugh lightly. Although they laughed, they all knew, even Feathertail, that they wouldn't be so lucky the second time.

"I want to put together a small, quick-moving patrol to go out after the fox." Leopardstar announced. "We'll track it to its den and then, when we know where it lives, return with a larger patrol—including warriors from other Clans. They'll want to get rid of this threat just as much as we do."

"Who's going to be on this patrol?" Heavystep asked from below. The cats around her begin to ask the same question.

"I'll be leading it myself." Leopardstar says. "And I'll take Hawkpaw —"

"But she's not ready!" Blackclaw pushed forward to stand next to Hawkpaw, who was beaming at being chosen. "She's just an apprentice! This mission is too dangerous!"

"Hawkpaw has already proven that she's just as impressive a fighter as warriors many seasons her elder." Leopardstar argued. "And don't forget: I am her mentor. I'll protect her if she needs protecting." Feathertail muffled a snort of laughter. As if Leopardstar has a great history of protecting cats! Even with his mistrust, Feathertail made a promise, and he swore to keep it. "I volunteer for the patrol with you and Hawkpaw!" Feathertail exclaims. Every cat looks at Feathertail with surprise, even his brother.

"Me too! I also volunteer to go!" Brookleap immediately jumped in. Feathertail was a bit surprised. His brother wanted to go? He wasn't sure why.

"What're you doing? That fox almost killed you! It almost killed all of us."

"First, so what? That just means we owe it an extra beating." Brookleap said. "Second, you're not about to leave me behind if you're heading off into something this dangerous." Feathertail smiled at Brookleap's words. They may not have been hanging out lately, but deep down inside, they were still brothers and always had to be there for each other.

"All right." Leopardstar announced. "Hawkpaw, Feathertail, Brookleap, and me. Four cats are enough." The Clan murmurs agreement and the meeting is dismissed. The four cats head to the fresh-kill pile to eat while Brightsky brings them all traveling herbs. The whole Clan gathers around and wishes them well as they set off on their mission.

They all travel for quite a while, never slowing down their pace. They venture deeper into the unfamiliar territory until they stop to find a place to rest. They all curl up under a bush and sleep for the night.

Feathertail dreams of the past. Of all the Riverclan warriors wanting him and his brother dead. Chanting for them to be killed. Even Leopardstar yowls for their heads to be cut off. The cats leap at the command to kill them... and then Feathertail wakes up.

He looks around at his surroundings and remembers where he is. He notices Leopardstar is not in the bush. Feathertail secretly hopes the fox found him and carried him away. To Feathertail's disappointment, Leopardstar appears over a hill carrying a plump rabbit in his jaws.

"Good morning, Feathertail. I was fortunate with this morning's hunt. Want to share it with me?" Leopardstar asked. Feathertail snorted and walked past Leopardstar. "I can catch my own prey, thanks."

Feathertail wanders off to hunt. He spots a mouse and successfully kills it. He returns with his catch and eats it away from the others. No matter what, he would never accept anything from Leopardstar.

The cats continue on their mission. "Wait—Hold on." Leopardstar halts along with the patrol. "I've lost the scent." He hissed. "It's this cursed wind!"

"I don't know about any other cat, but I think we've come about as far as we can." Brookleap approached Leopardstar. "Let's head back to camp. Pick this up again when we can all feel our paws." Just as Leopardstar was about to agree, Hawkpaw shouts, "It's all right! I've got the scent!" Leopardstar purrs in approval and the patrol sets off again. Eventually they come across the fox's den.

"I'd say we've arrived." Leopardstar murmured.

"Okay, now we head back to camp, yes?" Brookleap asked.

Before any cat could answer, Hawkpaw runs down towards the den.

"Hawkpaw! Get your tail back here!" Leopardstar shouts.

Hawkpaw sniffs inside the den and turns to the patrol. "It's all right, Leopardstar! The den's empty! The fox isn't here!" As soon as she said it, a growl could be heard. The patrol turned and saw the fox rounding the corner. The fox snarls and the patrol lunges to attack. "Hawkpaw! Stay behind me!" Leopardstar yowls as he, Feathertail, and Brookleap attack the fox. Despite the order, Hawkpaw leaps on the fox's back and attacks it. "Don't worry Leopardstar, I—"

The fox flung Hawkpaw off its back, and she landed with a heavy thud. The fox turns its attention to Hawkpaw and starts to creep up on her.

"Get away from her!" Leopardstar yowls and flings himself at the fox. The fox turns and catches Leopardstar in its jaws. It throws him down and digs its claws into his belly. "Run! While you have the chance!" Leopardstar winced with pain as the fox dug in deeper.

Feathertail stood and stared. This is what he wanted, right? For Leopardstar to die? To pay for what he did? He thought this was what he always wanted, but he didn't. He didn't want Leopardstar to die. Leopardstar was sacrificing himself to save them, and Feathertail wasn't going to let that happen. He lunged at the fox and

knocked it off Leopardstar. The fox yelped and nipped Feathertail on the shoulder.

"Feathertail!" Brookleap yowled, coming to save Feathertail. He lunges and attacks the fox's flank. Hawkpaw regains consciousness and also attacks the fox. The fox manages to kick Brookleap away. Hawkpaw scratches the fox's eyes again while Feathertail bites down hard on the fox's neck. The fox lets out a loud screech before falling to the ground and lying still. Brookleap gives the fox a shove and confirms it is dead.

Leopardstar gets up and looks at the three warriors. "Can you all... make it back... to camp?" The cats all nod and prepare to leave. Feathertail approaches to help Leopardstar until he leans in to whisper into Feathertail's ear. "Feathertail... you know Clan leaders have... nine lives... right?"

"Yes, so?"

"So you should have... done what I said... and left me there."

"Well, that's not what Clanmates do." Feathertail presses his shoulder against Leopardstar to help support him. Feathertail was shocked to feel that he was feeling pride at having saved Leopardstar. Brookleap comes to help when suddenly Leopardstar stops. "Feathertail, Brookleap, I... I need to say something to you... to you both." He lets out a shuddering breath. "I've wanted to say this for a long time... but I could never find the right moment... I am sorry for the way I treated you. For allying with Goldenstar. I was so... so very wrong. I never should've trusted him. And I should've protected you. My own ambition blinded me until it was far too late. Listen, I... I'm grateful you've both returned to Riverclan. And I'll understand if you can never forgive me. But I want you to know... I'm so proud of the warriors you've grown into. No thanks to me."

Feathertail felt a warm feeling inside him. These were the words he had wanted to hear for a long time. An apology was all he really wanted. And it took for Leopardstar almost dying to realize that he really does love Riverclan. They start walking again back towards the camp.

"Leopardstar, I—I think I can speak for Brookleap, too. We both know things have changed in Riverclan. And we forgive you." Leopardstar purred and started to cry. "Thank you. Thank you both." Feathertail also purred and they continued on their way.

The Gathering had come and everyone was glad to see Sandstar sitting on the Great Rock with the other leaders. After he had finished speaking, it was Leopardstar's turn to speak. "Riverclan also made it through leaf-bare without losing any cats..." He announced. "But it was a very near thing, and would have been different... had a Riverclan patrol not tracked and killed a fox that had assaulted our camp. That patrol owed a great measure of its success to two warriors in particular—Feathertail and Brookleap." Feathertail noticed Silverstream looking at them with pride in his eyes. Leopardstar began speaking again. "Without their bravery, I would not be speaking to you tonight."

After the Gathering had come to an end, Silverstream walked up to his sons. "You two may be getting tired of hearing this by now," He started. "But I am immensely proud of you, and deeply impressed."

"Thank you." Feathertail purred.

"You know." Silverstream turned to look at Feathertail. "While I'm delighted that you're thriving, and becoming great Riverclan warriors... I would always be happy to welcome you back to Thunderclan." Feathertail smiled, knowing what his answer would be. "Riverclan is our home now." He smiled.

Newleaf comes and Feathertail is thriving with his Clanmates. He rejoined Riverclan patrols and mingled with his Clanmates again. He looked out at the camp and delta surge of pride. This was his home. His Clan. And he couldn't be happier. During a border skirmish with Thunderclan, Feathertail defended Riverclan instead of agreeing with Thunderclan. He finally knows who he's loyal to.

Feathertail heads to his nest and curls up with his Clanmates for the night. He wakes up in his den and wanders out. It's still night, but no one seems to have noticed he left the den. He notices a cat sitting on the boulder. His fur a pale blue-gray and his fur sparkling with stars. Feathertail suddenly realizes what's going on.

"E-excuse me? Is this... is this Starclan?" he asks the cat hesitantly.

The cat turns and looks at him with brilliant blue eyes. "Yes it is, Feathertail. My name is Bluefur. I have a message for you, Feathertail. I need you to listen very carefully." Feathertail nodded and pricked his ears to focus. "A time of trouble is coming upon the forest. A new prophecy must be fulfilled if the Clans are to survive. And you have been chosen. There will be great danger. And you may not survive."

Feathertail thought about everything he had been through. He survived Goldenstar, he survived a fox attack, and he learned to trust his Clanmates. If he can do these things, he can surely face a task from Starclan. He looks at Bluefur and says with determination. "All right. I'm ready."

Author's Note: These didn't take long to write! Yes this is the end of this book. Graphic Novels will be very short. The next book will be Skyclan's Destiny! I'll publish the allegiances here in a bit.